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Sen. Arlen Specter holds a news conference after his release from the hospital. Behind him his wife, Joan, holds a grandchild, while daughter-in-law Tracey Specter holds another.

Specter is released from the hospital

His doctor said he should be able to resume "full activity" in two to four weeks.

Flanked by his family, Sen. Arlen Specter walked out of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital yesterday afternoon, two weeks after undergoing heart bypass surgery.

Specter said he and his wife planned to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary — one day late — and vowed to return to work "sooner rather than later." He thanked the hospital for "really tremendous care."

He then quickly slipped into a waiting Lincoln Town Car without answering reporters' questions.

Specter, 68, underwent heart bypass surgery June 1. His stay in the hospital was longer than usual because he developed aspiration pneumonia.

In a written statement released by Specter's Senate office, his doctor, Howard Weitz, is quoted as saying Specter should be able to return to "full activity" in two to four weeks. "I expect him to be able to resume his full senatorial schedule and duties at that time," Weitz said.

Specter was first elected to the Senate in 1980. He is up for reelection this fall and is seeking a fourth six-year term.

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